

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9344

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1380

E.O. 11652: GDS (DECLASSIFY ON DEC 31, 1981)

TAGS: MH PFOR SOPN

SUBJ: IAF PROJECT IN MONTSEERRAT

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

1. CHIEF MINISTER AUSTIN BRAMBLE OF MONTSEERRAT CALLED ON ME THIS MORNING TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER PROJECT WHICH INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION (IAF) IS SPONSORING ON HIS ISLAND. HE INFORMED ME THAT IAF CARIBBEAN PROJECT COORDINATOR LARRY LEIGHTON HAD TOLD HIM JULY 29, IAF HAD APPROVED US \$3,000 GRANT TO BUY PRINTING PRESS FOR "ALIOUGANA COMMUNE" AND THAT ADDITIONAL \$47,000 GRANT EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN DUE COURSE. GIVEN SMALL SIZE OF MONTSEERRAT (POP. 13,000), COMMUNE WITH MEMBERSHIP OF ROUGHLY 300 AND FUNDS SUPPLIED BY IAF WOULD BE MOST POWERFUL SINGLE ORGANIZATION ON THE ISLAND. PROGRAM OUTLINED BY COMMUNE, MAJOR THEME OF WHICH WAS "EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT", WAS UNOBJECTIONABLE INsofar AS HE WAS AWARE (HE WAS NOT FULLY COGNIZANT OF SCOPE OF WORK). NEVERTHELESS, NOTORIOUS MONTSEERRATAN RADICAL, GEORGE IRISH, WHO IS LECTURER AT MONA CAMPUS OF UWI AND PRESIDENT OF ALLIED WORKERS' UNION (MONTSEERRAT'S ONLY LABOR UNION), HAD PROVIDED IMPETUS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNE, AND VERY REAL DANGER EXISTED THAT IRISH WOULD USE THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNDS PROVIDED BY IAF FOR HIS OWN ENDS AND TO DETRIMENT OF SOCIAL PEACE ON MONTSEERRAT. BRAMBLE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT, IN RECOMMENDING PROJECT, LEIGHTON WAS BEING "VERY, VERY NAIVE" AND VOICED CONCERN OVER IAF'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ESTABLISH ANY CONTROL OVER AID TO COMMUNE OTHER THAN THROUGH AGREEMENT ON "GENERAL STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES." HE ALSO STATED LEIGHTON HAD TOLD HIM THAT, IF GOM UNWILLING

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ACCEPT PROJECT AS IT STANDS, IAF WOULD SIMPLY WITHDRAW. THIS

PUT HIM IN COMPLETELY UNTENABLE POSITION, BRAMBLE CONCLUDED, SINCE HE HAD CHOICE BETWEEN REJECTING AID FOR OSTENSIBLY USEFUL PROJECT OR ALLOWING COMMUNE TO ACQUIRE PRINTING PRESS AND THER EQUIPMENT WHICH COULD BE USED FOR ANY PURPOSE AT SOLE DISCRETION OF COMMUNE'S LEADERS.

2. COMMENT: IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MINISTER'S CONCERN IS ENTIRELY VALID, ALSO THAT BOTH GOM AND EMBASSY SHOULD HAVE BEEN KEPT INFORMED OF PROGRESS ON THIS PROJECT. LEIGHTON, IN EFFECT, FACED GOM (AND EMBASSY) WITH FAIT ACCOMPLI, THEN COMPOUNDED THE DAMAGE BY TELLING BRAMBLE "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT." TO DATE, NEITHER BRAMBLE NOR EMBASSY HAS BEEN APPRISED OF FULL SCOPE OF WORK UNDER TERMS OF IAF GRANT. IN ADDITION TO INTEREST WE HAVE IN COOPERATING WITH FRIENDLY LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE AN EVEN MORE DIRECT INTEREST IN THIS MATTER BECAUSE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO OWN PROPERTY ON MONTSERRAT AND IRISH'S WELL-KNOWN OPPOSITION TO THE OWNERSHIP OF LAND BY FOREIGNERS.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE MEMBER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF IAF AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE THAT IAF ASSISTANCE TO ALIOUGANA COMMUNE IS EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED, WHETHER BY MONITORING OR IN SOME OTHER WAY. BRAMBLE DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE IT SAID THAT HE IS TRYING TO BLOCK SUCH ASSISTANCE-AND, INDEED, HE IS NOT, SINCE THE BURDEN OF HIS PLEA IS NOT THAT ASSISTANCE BE WITHHELD BUT RATHER, THAT IT BE CONTROLLED; THEREFORE, NO MENTION SHOULD BE MADE TO IAF OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME. BRITTON

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